Another One Bites the Dust: Business Continuity Planning... Is Your Nonprofit Ready?

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Nonprofit Risk Management Center

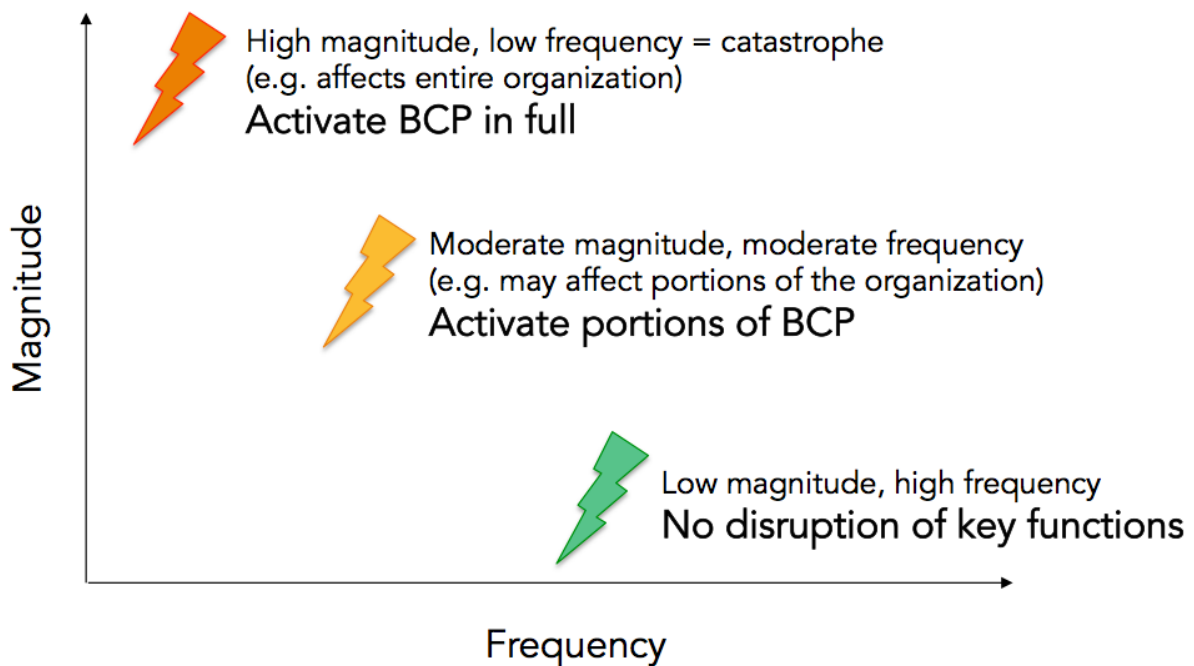Find the answer here | nonprofitrisk.org

Business Continuity Planning

BCP is the planning process that keeps absolutely necessary functions running during a period where normal operations are disrupted, and explains how other functions will be restored as soon as possible.
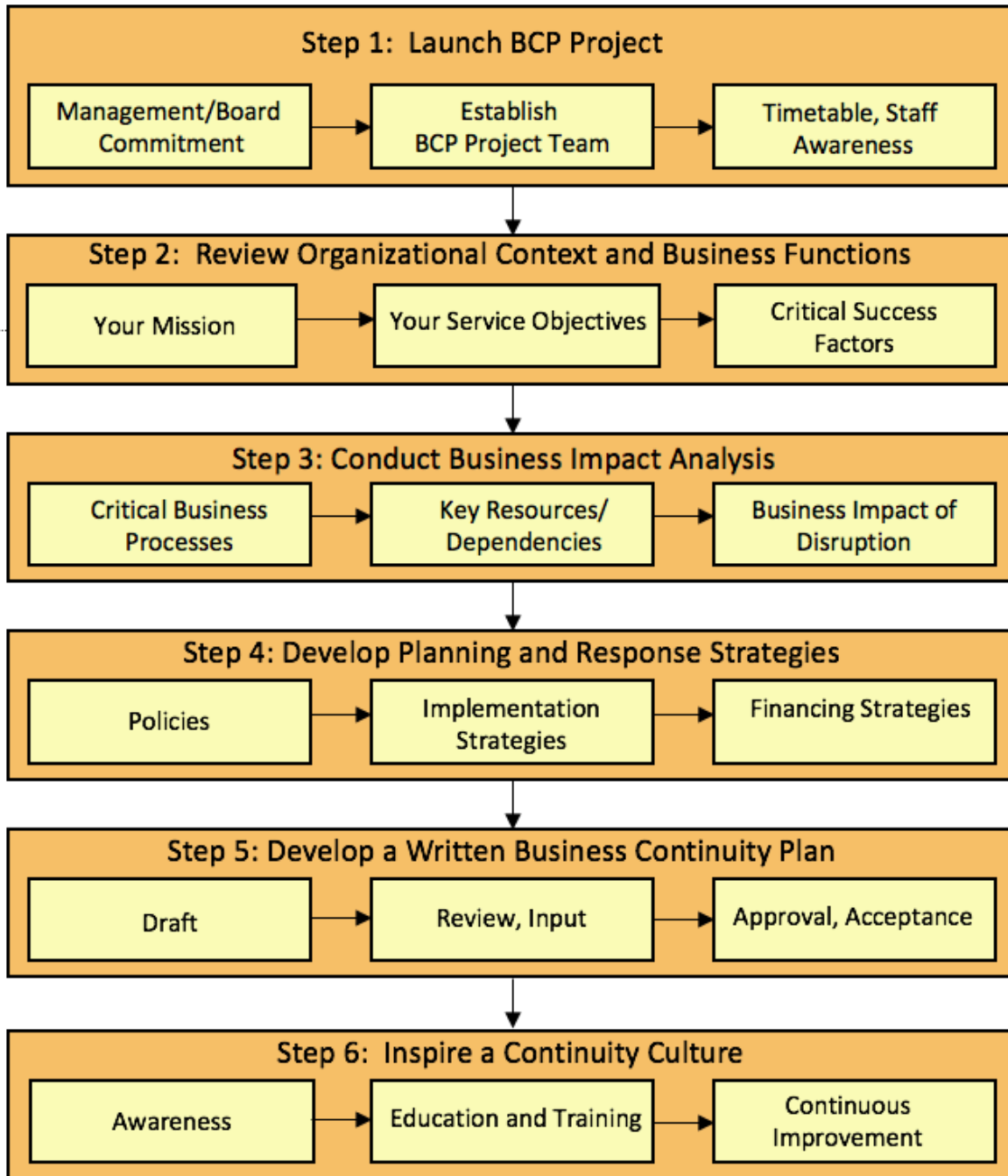
Business Impact Analysis

- Business processes – payroll, regulatory filings, communication with stakeholders, data management, etc.

- Key resources and dependencies – we need X in order to deliver Y

- Impact – what are the potential impacts of a disruption to our core programs and services?

Determining When to Activate the Business Continuity Plan

High magnitude, low frequency = catastrophe
(e.g. affects entire organization)
Activate BCP in full

Moderate magnitude, moderate frequency
(e.g. may affect portions of the organization)
Activate portions of BCP

Low magnitude, high frequency
No disruption of key functions

Magnitude

Frequency

Business Continuity Planning Process

Step 1: Launch BCP Project

Management/Board Commitment → Establish BCP Project Team → Timetable, Staff Awareness

Step 2: Review Organizational Context and Business Functions

Your Mission → Your Service Objectives → Critical Success Factors

Step 3: Conduct Business Impact Analysis

Critical Business Processes → Key Resources/Dependencies → Business Impact of Disruption

Step 4: Develop Planning and Response Strategies

Policies → Implementation Strategies → Financing Strategies

Step 5: Develop a Written Business Continuity Plan

Draft → Review, Input → Approval, Acceptance

Step 6: Inspire a Continuity Culture

Awareness → Education and Training → Continuous Improvement

SAMPLE Business Continuity Plan TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents:

SAMPLE Business Continuity Plan Outline

1. **Introduction**
   a. Purpose of the plan
   b. Essential functions ("mission critical functions" that must continue during a disruption)
   c. Priority list for resuming operations that are interrupted, including 'maximum acceptable downtime' for each program/operation

2. **Emergency Preparedness**
   a. Emergency action plans / evacuation plans
   b. Alternative work sites for specific activities and programs (e.g., reciprocal agreements with other nonprofits)
   c. Back up sources for supplies, equipment, etc.

3. **Technology**
   a. Strategy/approach for recovering data
   b. Ensuring access to systems and content
   c. Notification process for lost, damaged or inaccessible data/content

4. **Personnel**
   a. General staff information (e.g., how roles may change during a period of disruption)
   b. Emergency/Crisis team composition and assignments
   c. Responsibilities of staff members during a period of disruption
   d. Stakeholder communication strategies, assignments and action steps

5. **Financial**
   a. Banking information
   b. Continuity of payroll and benefits
   c. Continuity of vendor/contractor payments processing
   d. Ensuring the continuity of incoming payments

6. **Communications Strategy**
   a. Media contacts
   b. Local public safety and emergency response agencies
   c. Vendors, partners, affiliates
   d. Service recipients, clients, customers

7. **Plan Maintenance and Updating**
   a. Training and continuing education
   b. Evaluation and improvement of BCP efforts

Resources from the Nonprofit Risk Management Center - www.nonprofitrisk.org
- RISK eNews (weekly email article) www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/e-news

- *Facility Agility: Planning for Facility Emergencies*
  www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/articles/facility-agility-planning-facility-emergencies

- *Avoid Transition Trauma with a Succession Plan*
  www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/articles/avoid-transition-trauma-with-a-succession-plan

- *Succession Planning for [NOT] the CEO*
  www.nonprofitrisk.org/resources/e-news/succession-planning-not-ceo

Additional Resources
- Business Continuity Planning Resources from Ready.gov (www.ready.gov)
  www.ready.gov/business/implementation/continuity

- Ready Rating, a free service from the American Red Cross
  http://www.readyrating.org/

- Hazard Specific Guides from Virginia Tech
  https://emergency.vt.edu/ready/guides.html

- Examples of emergency response guidelines from Virginia Tech:
  - Secure-in-place:
    https://emergency.vt.edu/content/dam/emergency_vt_edu/programs-1/online-toolkit/secure-in-place.jpg
  - Shelter-in-place:
    https://emergency.vt.edu/content/dam/emergency_vt_edu/programs-1/online-toolkit/shelter-in-place.jpg

- *Emergency Management Guide for Business & Industry*, FEMA
www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1511-20490-6446/bizindst.pdf

https://www.csoonline.com/article/2124593/disaster-recovery/emergency-preparedness-how-to-perform-a-disaster-recovery-business-impact-analysis.html

Crisis Communications

Three Categories of Risk Communication
Source: Peter M. Sandman, Ph.D., and Jody Lanard, M.D., www.psandman.com
- <u>Precaution advocacy</u> ("Watch out!"): alerting people to serious hazards when they are unduly apathetic.
- <u>Outrage management</u> ("Calm down!"): reassuring people about minor hazards.
- <u>Crisis communication</u> ("We'll get through it together!"): Guiding people through serious hazards when they are appropriately upset (or even in denial).

What are the essential elements?
- CARE - express concern
- OWNERSHIP - accept responsibility
- SHARING – what you're doing to: control situation, repair damage or harm, or prevent recurrence

What's in a Crisis Communication Plan?
- List of staff trained as spokespeople (and their contact info)
- List of stakeholder groups you may need to communicate with (internal/external)
- List of media contacts or channels you will potentially use to share your message
- Pre-drafted materials and messaging (e.g., press releases, talking points, website splash page, emergency phone message, etc.)
- Standard language about your mission, stakeholders and existing crisis management protocols
- A phone/email tree so you can reach staff and board members 24-7
- Login credentials for social media accounts or other communication platforms

Selecting a Spokesperson (liaison to external stakeholders)
- Good under pressure
- Can stay on message
- Assertive body language
- Willing to PREPARE / Already has experience
- Can act as point person for external inquiries AND for outgoing communications
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The Five C's of Crisis Communications
5 traits for effective spokespeople: (Source of C's 2-5 is Brad Philips, Mr. Media Training)
1. Consistency
2. Credibility
3. Commitment
4. Caring
5. Capability

Drafting Talking Points for Your Spokesperson
- Stay mission-focused
- Be consistent

- Watch out for language and tone (show compassion & sincerity)
- Tell the truth and nothing else (and if you don't know, just say so)
- Accept responsibility
- Don't leave a vacuum

10 Tips for Social Media Use in Crisis Communications

Source: Nicole Stillwell, New Media Unit, Office of Policy Coordination & Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State

1. <u>Cease normal operations</u> – delete PRE-SCHEDULED or AUTOMATED content; also, make sure staff know that during a crisis, social media posts may be viewed as important, official announcements about what's happening

2. <u>Acknowledge the situation immediately</u> – acknowledge rogue tweets/posts ASAP

3. <u>Get your message to as many platforms as possible</u> – when possible, link to detailed, official content about the crisis, such as on a .gov site

4. <u>Be prepared to address vulnerabilities</u> – do you know how to report hacking, bugs and other glitches that could negatively affect your content? Or user access?

5. <u>Find the right balance</u> – realistic messaging schedule that conveys necessary information but doesn't divert personnel from more critical tasks. ALSO – social media messaging should be consistent with your other official messages.

6. <u>Don't participate in a conversation when your brand doesn't belong</u> – post relevant information… never to simply to get your NAME on the publicity bandwagon

7. <u>Don't feed the trolls</u> – SHOW RESTRAINT! Be professional; use humor appropriately

8. <u>Correct; don't delete</u> – Deleting information or an entire account due to negative interactions with the public is generally viewed as suspect, and may hurt your organization's credibility and reputation while exacerbating negative sentiment.

9. <u>Listen to your audience</u> – their messages may contain helpful information you can use to investigate

10. <u>If you have to disengage; say so</u> – if you simply don't have the resources to engage via social media during a crisis, don't delete or temporarily remove accounts. Instead, post via social media that due to ongoing circumstances, your organization does not have the ability to respond to or monitor comments via social media.

New Resource! **www.MyBusinessContinuityPlan.org**

Affiliate Member Resources
www.nonprofitrisk.org